

I think Donald Park is one of those trails that may not be well known in Wisconsin. I try to ride as many trails as I possibly can and I have had the pleasure of riding in Donald Park on many occasions.

Donald Park is located 15 miles Southwest of Madison, between Mount Vernon and Mount Horeb. The Donald County Park horse trails are in the Town of Springdale, southeast of Mt. Horeb off Highway 92, just west of Mt. Vernon.



The Donald/Woodburn family donated the original 105 acres for this park. The park has since grown to encompass 480 acres containing oak woods, intriguing rock outcroppings with scenic vistas and springs. Donald Park is also known for its trout streams; Deer Creek and Frye Feeder, and Mt. Vernon Creek. There is a small picnic area called Pop's Knoll developed through a generous donation from the Woodburn family and the efforts of the Friends of Donald Park.



There are 3.5 miles of Multi-use Trails in the park. **The trail surface is mostly grass, with some sand and short segments of gravel.** There are an additional 17.5 miles of horse trail easements on lands outside of the park – both south of the park and to the north across Hwy 92, for horseback riding (Preachers Cap Trail & Devil's Chimney Trail). Trails are in the area where rolling hills shaped by glaciers meet the more rugged terrain of the Driftless Area.

Trails inside the park are 10' wide, two-way, multi-use trails (horses, hikers, No Bikes). Trails outside the park vary from 10' wide to smaller cut-off trails that are one horse wide unimproved, natural trails.

Horse drawn vehicles are allowed — some trails are a little steep – proceed with caution.

Trails are open for horses May 1st until October 31st. Trails are sometimes closed for various reasons, please check the Dane County Parks website for current conditions.

Info Line 608-242-4576.

Trail Pass are required for Horseback Riding at Donald Park.

Season Horse Trail Passes are \$20 and \$12 for seniors 65 or better. Each person who rides over the age of 16 are required to purchase a Trail Pass.

A daily trail pass can be purchased at the Equestrian Trail Head Kiosk at the park. The trail pass is good for any of the Dane County Parks with horse trails. Many riders enjoy trail riding with their dogs, however, dogs must be on a leash at all times.

There is no camping available at the park, so plan for a day ride.

I typically ride in Donald Park a few times a year. Spring, summer and fall are all beautiful times to ride the trails. Different vegetation can be enjoyed depending on the season. The trails are very well maintained and offer a diverse riding experience.

Since I ride a Rocky Mountain horse, I appreciate the opportunity to gait, and Donald Park offers several long stretches for gaiting. In some areas there are hills to provide some good up and down riding but your horse does not need to be very conditioned to meet the challenge.

Those of us who participate in the Ride Wisconsin program are always looking for different trails to ride. If you live in the area and do not need to camp, I encourage you to make Donald Park one of your riding destinations.

“No hour of life is wasted that is spent in the saddle.”

Winston Churchill

Until next time – Happy Trails!